

HEBREW AND NORTH WEST SEMITIC: REFLECTIONS ON THE CLASSIFICATION OF THE SEMITIC LANGUAGES

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1. AS IS WELL KNOWN, the comparative method has been elaborated upon with reference to the Indo-European languages. For more than a century, it has been customary to view them from the angle of both the family-tree theory and the wave hypothesis. As far as the continuity of the territory of Indo-European languages can be posited, it is the wave hypothesis that best explains the relation of the languages involved. Yet the position of the Indo-European languages in historical times presupposes migrations, and the linguistic situation due to them is best interpreted in the light of the family-tree theory.¹

2. One immediately recognizes that the wave hypothesis is much more convincing if applied to the Semitic languages. Even a hasty glance at the map of the Semitic tongues, in the past and in our own day, more or less reveals the continuity of the domain of these languages. Moreover, close contact between various Semitic idioms is well attested throughout history, the more so since Semitic languages surprisingly often were established as *linguae francae*, used in preference to the spoken language. This was the case not only with the language of a great power, viz., Akkadian, in which, e.g., Canaanite princes wrote their diplomatic correspondence with Pharaoh around 1400 B.C.E. (the Tel el-Amarna letters), but also with Phoenician, used in Karatepe and Zen-

1. See, e.g., Porzig (1954, p. 28).

jirli, and especially with Aramaic. The status of the latter as an international language is mirrored in the Hebrew Bible in the demand of Hezekiah's officials from Rab-Shakeh to speak Aramaic, rather than Akkadian (2 Kgs 18:26). Cultural contact is well attested outside the domain of the *lingua franca* as well, one of its outstanding examples being the affinity of poetic structure in Hebrew and Ugaritic. Accordingly, linguistic phenomena were apt to spread to Semitic dialects which had different origins and histories, which thus eventually give the impression that they historically belonged to a separate branch of the Semitic languages, which had earlier seceded from the other branches of the Semitic speech community. In fact, however, the similarity of these dialects is due to contact and parallel development.

2.1 The possibility of parallel development is, it seems, a factor to be taken into consideration even more in Semitic than in Indo-European languages. The importance of the fundamental difficulty of distinguishing between initial identity and parallel development, which pertains to the very essence of comparative linguistics, was stressed for comparative Indo-European grammar by Meillet in a famous paper (1958, pp. 36–43). Because of the very close affinity of Semitic tongues, which are not less similar to each other than languages belonging to one branch of Indo-European, constituting a very similar starting point for the various Semitic languages, one must allow for the possibility of parallel development on a larger scale than in Indo-European linguistics.²

2. Accordingly, it is very difficult to distinguish between the diffusion of linguistic elements, in accordance with the wave hypothesis, and parallel (and even convergent) development. Thus, the features interpreted by Rabin in his important and stimulating paper (1963) as due to linguistic diffusion, are, to my mind, rather cases of parallel development, the assumption of linguistic diffusion being contravened by the fact that most of the features adduced by Rabin extend over very long periods. Constant attention to the possibility of parallel development may save the scholar from pitfalls such as Kutscher's suggestion (1971, pp. 389–390) that, if during the centuries of its coexistence with Canaanite-Hebrew, Aramaic has jettisoned those (consonantal) phonemes that were alien to Canaanite-Hebrew, one can think of only one reason—the fact that the Canaanite-Hebrew substratum was able to assert itself, imposing its phonemic set upon the Aramaic substratum. This assumption, however, though possible, is by no means necessary. The (synchronic) identity of the stock of consonantal phonemes of Official Aramaic with that of Canaanite-Hebrew may well be due to convergent development. Setting aside the special development of the laryngals/pharyngals, due to the Sumerian substratum, Akkadian has developed exactly the same stock of consonantal phonemes as Canaanite-Hebrew, and, with the partial exception of the shift $\dot{s} > \dot{z}$, even the individual sound shifts were identical with that of Canaanite-Hebrew, as against the different sound shifts in Aramaic! Therefore, the (synchronically) identical stock of consonantal phonemes in Canaanite-Hebrew and Aramaic may well be due to the general drift, which exerted its influence on Akkadian as well.

2.2 The importance of contact and parallel development in Semitic comparative grammar does not, of course, entirely dispense with the need for the model of the family-tree diagram. The basic division of the Semitic languages into East Semitic (= Akkadian) and West Semitic is best explained by the assumption of the early separation of Akkadian from the rest of the Semitic tongues, in accordance with the family-tree model. Later, to be sure, Akkadian came into close contact with various Semitic languages, influencing them³ and being influenced by them,⁴ so that even for Akkadian, the family-tree model does not suffice.⁵

3. Introductions to comparative linguistics almost invariably mention the more favorable case, where the parent language is known from written records,⁶ viz., the Romance dialects. Therefore, it will be convenient to start with such a case among the Semitic languages, viz., the modern Arabic dialects. One will take care, to be sure, not to simply identify Classical Arabic⁷ or even its pre-Islamic predecessor with the parent language of the Arabic dialects or to consider pre-Islamic standard Arabic and the parent language of the Arabic dialects as if they were "mother" and "daughter." It stands to reason that they were rather "sister" languages, closely related and mutually intelligible, so that it is not too difficult to reconstruct the proto-language of the Arabic dialects which, to be sure, was by no means homogeneous (cf. Fischer, 1959, p. vii). The same applies, however, to Proto-Romance as well (see Hall, 1972): Classical Latin differs in various respects from Proto-Romance and is decidedly not its direct ancestor, and one must take into account the dialectal division in Proto-Romance as well. And just as the comparative study of the Romance languages is especially important because of the light it sheds on the value of our inferences in the cases in which no record of the proto-language is available, so is the comparative study of the Arabic dialects.

3. See, e.g., Zimmern (1917), Kutscher (1971, pp. 386–387), and Kaufman (1974).

4. See, e.g., for Aramaic influence: Rimalt (1932) and Kutscher (1971, pp. 356–358); for "Amorite" influence: Moran (1965, p. 62) and Kaufman (1974, pp. 22–27), who also mentions Aramaic influence; in general: Ungnad-Matouš (1964, pp. 7–8).

5. Yet even a model like Southworth's (1964), which takes into account independent isoglosses, does not suffice, since it loses sight of changes due to contact.

6. So, e.g., Bloomfield (1933, pp. 300ff).

7. I do not claim, of course, that Arabic has especially preserved the Proto-Semitic language type. In my opinion (see already Bergsträsser, 1928, pp. 134ff), in the main, Arabic mirrors the late Semitic language type. Similarly, nobody will claim that Latin, rather than any other Indo-European language, mirrors the ancient Indo-European language structure. Yet both Latin and Arabic have the great advantage of, more or less, serving as proto-languages.

3.1 Before starting with a (rather cursory) overall comparative view of the Arabic dialects (see Section 3.2 below), it will be expedient to adduce some features in which pre-Islamic standard Arabic and the parent language of the Arabic dialects (at least partly) differ. Whereas Classical Arabic uses 'ī ('yes'), both 'ē (see, e.g., Barthélemy, 1935–69, s.v.) and 'aywā (<'ay wallāhi; see, e.g., Dozy, 1881, s.v.,⁸ also borrowed into Turkish, which again influenced some Arabic dialects), occurring in some dialects, attest to *'ay. As against Classical Arabic *hākaḏā*, many dialects suggest an etymon *hākiḏā* (see Blanc, 1964, p. 199, note 161). Whereas the perfect forms of *verba mediae geminatae* terminating in suffixes beginning with a consonant are built like *ḥalalt(u)* in Classical Arabic, in dialects *hallayt* and its developments prevail, already attested as ancient dialectal forms (see Kofler, 1941, p. 65; Wright, 1896–1898, I, p. 69).

3.2 Relying on features like *hallayt* mentioned above, Ferguson (1959) posited a relatively homogeneous *koiné* in the first centuries of the Muslim era, from which most modern sedentary dialects stem, especially those outside Arabia. Yet this theory has to be rejected, especially since the history of the Arabic dialects lacks a single linguistic center of prestige and communication (for particulars see Blau, 1965a, pp. 12–17 and forthcoming, §§6.5, 6.6). Moreover, Bedouin dialects, even from Arabia, frequently evince features that are generally considered as peculiar to the sedentary vernaculars and in other cases fluctuate between what is presumably old Bedouin usage and a new one which corresponds to that of the sedentary dialects, thus revealing the imprint of the latter and/or convergent development. Thus the *koiné* stands at the end of the linguistic development, rather than at its beginning, being due to the general drift and the diffusion of linguistic features. The main lesson to be learned from the growth of the modern Arabic dialects is the understanding of the extent of the diffusion of language forms, also favored by the basic similarity of the various dialects (which also facilitated parallel development). Not only phonetic features, like the shift of *q* to ' , spread over a vast dialect area, as well as lexemes, like *hayk* ('so'; see Blau, 1965a, p. 14), but morphological innovations as well, as *hallayt* quoted above. It is generally assumed (see, e.g., Weinreich, 1953, pp. 31–37, 43–44 and Kaufman, 1974, p. 122), that, under favorable circumstances, even bound morphemes may be transferred from language to language; and in the case of the Arabic dialects (as well as in the case of close contact between Semitic languages), the

8. Féghali (1919, p. 15, note 5) offers a much less plausible etymology. This, however, does not affect the derivation of 'ay from *'ay, rather than from *'ī.

circumstances were favorable indeed: because of the great similarity between these tongues the diffusion of even bound morphemes was made possible. Accordingly, even unmotivated morphological innovations⁹ shared by Semitic languages being in close contact are not necessarily valid for genetic classification, since they *may* be due to the diffusion resulting from close contact. This, of course, makes genetic classification that much more difficult.

4. It seems that the basic division of the Semitic languages into East (= Akkadian) and West Semitic is sound. Akkadian is characterized in a positive way by the far-reaching influence of the Sumerian substratum, phonetically mirrored in the weakening of the laryngals/pharyngals, and in a negative way by the absence of the West Semitic perfect *qatala* and the internal passive. It could have happened, to be sure, that some Semitic dialect exhibiting the Akkadian type stative **qatila/*qatula* (rather than the West Semitic type perfect *qatala* and passive *qitila* etc.) developed the West Semitic forms through close contact with a Western type dialect rather than by genetically belonging to the West Semitic type (cf. Hetzron, 1975, p. 108); and Hetzron (1976, p. 105) even considers the possibility of independent innovation. Yet, in my opinion, the existence of *qatala* and *qitila* in all the Semitic languages¹⁰ with the exception of Akkadian makes the assumption of a separate historical West Semitic entity for at least most of them absolutely imperative, in accordance with the theory accepted by most scholars.

4.1 An additional feature, *historically* a part of the structure of the West Semitic languages, yet *perhaps* originally absent from Akkadian, is the indicative "imperfect" *yqtlu*.¹¹ Some scholars, to be sure, posited it for Proto-

9. For the importance of morphological features for genetic classification cf., e.g., Meillet (1958, pp. 91-92), Polotsky (1964, p. 360, note 10), and especially Hetzron (1974, pp. 181-194; 1975, pp. 107-108; 1976, pp. 89-108).

10. During the development of the West Semitic languages some, in turn, *lost qatala* and *qitila*. *qatala*, e.g., is absent from modern East Aramaic dialects, and in many Semitic languages the internal passive has been superseded by former reflexive verbal themes. In the latter case, however, the category of the passive is still present, although its formal expression has changed. Moreover, in both cases, these languages exhibit later developments, after they had historically possessed *qatala/qitila*. In Akkadian, however, the use of the stative mirrors a stage in which the perfect *qatala* and the passive had *not yet* developed.

11. Again, it is absent from many West Semitic languages. This, however, was due to historical development as well, during which the imperfect *yqtlu* disappeared. We shall deal later (in Section 5) with the hypothesis that *yqtlu* formed a part of "Central" Semitic only. Here, we are concerned only with the question of whether or not *yqtlu* was a part of the Proto-Akkadian verbal structure as well, i.e., whether it was a Proto-Semitic or rather a West Semitic feature.

Semitic (Soden, 1959, as punctual, as against durative *yaqattil*, both Proto-Semitic in his opinion), whereas Kuryłowicz (1961, pp. 55ff; cf. also p. 49) considered *yqtl* the original imperfect in Akkadian as well, which was later replaced in Akkadian by *yaqattal*, etc. and confined to secondary functions, viz., as *modus relativus* (in relative clauses, etc.). Since the relegation of ancient features to secondary features (I would rather speak of their preservation in closed syntagmemes)¹² is very well attested, this proposition is quite attractive. One must not, however, lose sight of the fact that, synchronically at least, the alleged continuation of Proto-Semitic **yaqtulu*, i.e., Akkadian *iprusu*, does not denote the indicative imperfect in relative clauses, etc., but rather the preterite in this syntactic environment, the imperfect (present) being marked by *iparrasu*. Accordingly, if one adheres to the view that *iprusu* originates in the Proto-Semitic indicative imperfect *yaqtulu*, one has to postulate that, through the impact of the Akkadian preterite *iprus*, the use of *iprusu* became that of *modus relativus* of the preterite (and then the *modus relativus* ending *-u* was transposed to the other indicative forms as well).¹³ This supposition is, to be sure, possible, yet rather intricate. On the other hand, there are internal Akkadian indications which may suggest the (comparatively) late date of the emergence of Akkadian *iparras* (= *yaqattal*): many "weak" verbs¹⁴ exhibit "weak" formation of *iparras* (see Soden, 1952, pp. 126ff) and this may indicate that these forms were built according to the preterite forms, exhibiting *yaqtul* etc. This assumption would, e.g., explain the present *ubbal* (from *wabālum*, "to carry"), formed according to the preterite *ūbil* (alongside "strong" *Duwaššar*; one will interpret "weak" D forms as being influenced by the "weak" G forms). This interpretation is, *prima facie*, buttressed by the fact that in Old Akkadian original I pharyngals/laryngals behave as "strong" verbs (see Gelb, 1961, p. 181), thus suggesting that their later "weakness" is due to the influence of *verba I w/y* etc. Accordingly, one would fix the time of

12. For the relegation of ancient features to closed syntagmemes (cf. Blau, 1961-62, pp. 70-71) see Arabic *yqtl* in the sense of the past used only after *lam* and in conditional clauses, Hebrew *yqtl* after *wa-* ("and"); Arabic *lā* preceding *qtl* in parallel negations; *yktb* (as against *bktb*) in some modern Arabic dialects as subjunctive; Arabic *'ahad* (as against *wāhid*) after negation etc., as the first member of construct structures and in certain numerals; in modern Aramaic dialects the participle without *wo* is used in subordination (Cohen, 1924, p. 216). Cf. also Blau (1960, p. 100).

13. For the productivity of the *-u* suffix cf. its Middle Babylonian (sometimes also Old Babylonian) addition to the third person singular feminine ending of the stative (cf. Soden, 1952, p. 108). Sarauw (1912, p. 68) posits an original *modus relativus iparrasu*, from which the *u* was then transferred to *iprus*.

14. I do not take into account *verba mediae w/y*, because the doubling of the last radical, rather than of *w/y*, may be due to the aversion to double *w*, attested in several Semitic languages (see Blau, 1971, pp. 147ff).

the emergence of *iparras* after the "weak" formation of *G iprus* of *I w/y* (as demonstrated by *ubbal* built according to *ūbil*), but before *I* pharyngals/laryngals had become "weak" (as hinted by "strongly" formed *iparras* of these verbs in Old Akkadian). If the assumption of the late date of *iparras* should, in fact, turn out to be true,¹⁵ it would make the notion of an early Akkadian **yaqtulu* much more palatable.

4.2 There are, however, rather strong indications that *yaqattal* etc. is a Proto-Semitic, or even a "Hamito-Semitic" feature, being attested in Ethiopic and Berber (see Polotsky, 1964, pp. 110–111). Parallel development, to be sure, is a very frequent feature in Semitic languages (see Section 2.1 above) and it has been assumed for *yaqattal* by many scholars (see the literature adduced by Polotsky, 1964, p. 358, note 29). Yet one has to admit that the existence of a strange feature such as gemination outside *D*,¹⁶ occurring in Akkadian, Ethiopic and Berber makes it much more likely to assume that Akkadian *iparras* (as well as its Ethiopic¹⁷ and Berber parallels) continue a Proto-(Hamito-)Semitic feature, although it is not easy to understand its "weak" formation in the Akkadian weak verb.

Nevertheless, this assumption does not necessarily imply that the Akkadian *modus relativus iprusu* cannot be the continuation of Proto-Semitic *yaqtulu* etc. One could postulate (with Soden, 1957) that in Proto-Semitic two present/future forms coexisted, viz., punctual *yaqtulu* etc., and durative *yaqattil* etc. In Akkadian *yaqattil* superseded *yaqtulu*, which was preserved only in closed syntagmemes, i.e., in relative clauses etc.

5. In Ethiopic and modern South Arabic no traces of *yaqtulu* etc. can be detected, and we do not know how to vocalize the prefix tense forms in Epigraphic South Arabic.¹⁸ The so-called North West Semitic languages as

15. Cf. also Bergsträsser, 1918-29, II, p. 12.

16. Cf. Sarauw (1912, p. 67). On the other hand, I do not agree with his assumption that, were *yaqtulu* early, *yaqtulu* and *yaqtul* would have to be interpreted as moods of one tense. The "imperfect" *yaqtulu* and the preterite *yaqtul* are different tenses, and it is only between *yaqtulu* and the jussive *yaqtul* that a relationship of moods obtains.

17. No certain traces of *yaqattal* etc. have been detected in North West Semitic languages. In "Amorite," because of its close contact with Akkadian, such forms, especially in proper names, could well exhibit Akkadian influence. Biblical Hebrew reflects no vestiges of it (despite Meyer, 1966-72, I, p. 19; II, pp. 121, 134–135), nor does Ugaritic (see Gordon, 1965, p. 67, §9.2, following H. L. Ginsberg). Cf., in general, Fenton (1970).

18. The subjunctive of *verba III w/y* clearly evinces that it terminated in a vowelless *w/y*. As to the controversy on the origins of the Main Verb-Markers in the Northern Gura verb, see the exposition and the literature adduced by Hetzron (1977, pp. 88–92). At any rate, even according to Hetzron's view, the Main Verb-Markers do not attest to Proto-West Semitic *yaqtulu*.

well as Arabic, on the other hand, attest to *yaqtulu*. Therefore, Hetzron (1974, p. 189; 1975, p. 107; 1976, p. 105; 1977, pp. 14–15), who regarded *yaqtulu* as an innovation, posited a Central Semitic branch, consisting of Arabic, Canaanite and Aramaic, sharing the morphological innovation *yaqtulu* (cf. also Polotsky, 1964, p. 110), thus restricting South Semitic to South Arabic and Ethiopic, which, like Akkadian, did not share the innovated *yaqtulu*.

One can hardly consider the claim that *yaqtulu* was absent from Proto-South Arabic (from which Ethiopic as well branched off) as proven. If Proto-Semitic in fact had two forms marking the present/future, viz., punctual *yaqtulu* and durative *yaqattil*, these forms were threatened because of their similarity in function, on the one hand, and because of their formal similarity to *yaqtul* and the D prefix form, on the other. Therefore, the total absence of one of them from any language does not prove that it did not occur in a preceding stratum. Thus the total disappearance of the short imperfect from rabbinic Hebrew, as opposed to the ordinary imperfect, could be interpreted as an indication of the total absence of *yaqtulu* in the linguistic strata preceding rabbinic Hebrew; yet biblical Hebrew, exhibiting the short imperfect as opposed to the ordinary one, attests to the existence of *yaqtulu*. Similarly, nothing must be inferred from the lack of any indication of *yaqtulu* in modern South Arabic and Ethiopic for Proto-South Arabic. Furthermore, as to Epigraphic South Arabic, although it is very difficult to state anything certain because of the total lack of vocalization, the possibility of *w/y* used as *matres lectionis* (see Beeston, 1962, p. 5; Jamme, 1962, p. 80b, line 7), and the uncertainty as to the classes of verbal themes, I nevertheless have the feeling that it is easier to interpret various forms by the assumption that, presumably alongside *yaqattil* etc., Epigraphic South Arabic also had *yaqtulu* etc. Thus the simplest way to account for verbs *II w/y* spelled without *w/y* in indicative function (like *yknn*; see Beeston, 1962, p. 26) is to postulate *yakûnunna*, *yakûnanna*, i.e. an “energetic” form derived from *yaqtul*. Yet one may interpret such forms in accordance with Akkadian forms exhibiting doubling of the last, rather than of the middle radical (like *ikunnû*). The same may apply (cf. Jamme, 1962, no. 577, line 5) to *wyh'nw* (“and they helped,” root ‘*wn*’), which, however, may also exhibit short imperfect denoting the past (yet cf. *ibid.*, line 12 *ylfyhmw*, also referring to the past, and because of the *y* presumably not to be interpreted as short imperfect). On the other hand, *yhqðw* (with assimilation of the *n*, root *nqð*, “he carried away”; Jamme, 1962, no. 586, line 22) by necessity exhibits a vowelless first radical (because of the assimilation of the *n*) and is, therefore, presumably to be interpreted as *yaqtulu* (this is more likely than its interpretation as short imperfect referring to the past, cf. *ylfyhmw* quoted above). If the *b*-imperfect is in fact indicative

(see Höfner, 1943, pp. 79–81; Beeston, 1962, pp. 24–25), *bynd* (root *mdd*; Beeston, 1976, p. 420, line 72) exhibits *yaqtulu*. Höfner (1943, p. 90) interprets *yhz* as *yuhazihhu*, and I am inclined to interpret similarly the *h*-causatives of *šrr* and *s₃l* referring to the past (see Jamme, 1962, s.vv. *hšr* and *hšl* [!]). I have also noted imperfect forms terminating in (energetic?) *n* in relative clauses in indicative function, without, however, losing sight of the fact that in Epigraphic South Arabic there seems to be formal affinity between the use of the imperfect in relative clauses and the jussive (see Beeston, 1962, p. 24): *yknn* (see above, root *kwn*) in Jamme (1962, no. 750, line 14); *yž'n* (root *wz'*, ‘‘he will continue’’), *ibid.*, no. 577, line 18; *ymrn* (root *mrr*, ‘‘it occurs (?)’’), *ibid.*, no. 711, line 5. Cf. also Jamme (1962) no. 669, line 10; no. 729, line 9 *yldn* (‘‘he will be born,’’ in conditional clauses), root *wld*; no. 577, line 15 *yθrw* (‘‘they leveled’’, root *wθr*). These examples (which can easily be augmented), although they can be explained in various ways, nevertheless give the impression that they at least partly attest to the existence of *yaqtulu* in Epigraphic South Arabic. At any rate, there is no indication for its absence from Epigraphic South Arabic. Accordingly, one ought rather to abstain from transferring Arabic to the ‘‘innovating Central Semitic’’ branch because of the alleged absence of *yaqtulu* etc. in Proto-South Arabic.

5.1 Nor do the other alleged innovations of Arabic, shared with Canaanite and Aramaic, prove that Arabic is closer to Canaanite and Aramaic than to South Arabic and Ethiopic, and that, accordingly, it has to be grouped with the former as Central Semitic, rather than with the latter as South Semitic.

5.1.1 There exist positive indications of shared innovations common to South Arabic, Ethiopic, and Arabic. The most outstanding among these are the ‘‘broken plurals.’’ One must not claim that they mirror a common retention (so Hetzron, 1975, p. 102): even if the notion of broken plurals should turn out to be an ancient Hamito-Semitic feature, it is not the existence of broken plurals as such that proves the close affinity of Arabic, South Arabic and Ethiopic, but rather their widespread formal identity; cf., e.g., Arabic *qital*, Ge‘ez *qətal*; Arabic *qatalat*, Ge‘ez *qatalt*, both denoting plurals of participles and *nomina agentia*; Arabic *qitāl*, Ge‘ez *qətāl*; Arabic *qutūl*, Ge‘ez *qətūl*; Arabic *‘aqtul*, *‘aqtilat*, Ge‘ez *‘aqtəl*, *‘aqtəlt*; Arabic and Ge‘ez *‘aqtāl*; Arabic *maqātil*, *maqātilat*, Ge‘ez *maqātəl*, *maqātəlt*. The occurrence of some scattered parallels to these broken plurals in other Semitic languages must not be considered remnants, but rather the primary elements from which the South Semitic languages, including Arabic, built their broken plurals. The comparatively late age of the broken plurals is proven by their invariable tri-radical

form, whereas the "sound plural" has sometimes preserved its bi-literal form: cf. Arabic *banūna* ("sons"), formed from the bi-radical basis *ban*, as against the tri-radical broken plural *'abnā* (cf. Blau, 1965, p. 278).¹⁹

5.1.2. Another important morphological innovation shared by the South Semitic languages is the development of the verbal theme *qātala*. *qātala*, it seems, is a general West Semitic innovation, yet its development in quite a similar manner in Arabic and Ethiopic (see Fleisch, 1944, especially his general conclusion on pp. 41 7ff) has, in all probability, to be interpreted as an additional proof for the inclusion of Arabic in the South Semitic group.

5.1.3 I consider the broken plurals and *qātala* as the main morphological proof for the affinity of Arabic and South Arabic (including Ethiopic). Other real or alleged shared features are less cogent. Nothing can be inferred from the existence of *f*, instead of northern *p*, because the shift *p > f*, without necessarily applying to other stops, is a universal feature (see Vendryès, 1972, p. 110). In both Arabic and Ge'ez *š* shifted to *s*, and *ś* to *š*. This, however, is another case of surprising parallel developments, so often occurring in Semitic languages: it has been proven that in Epigraphic South Arabic and modern South Arabic these shifts have not occurred (see the literature cited in Blau, 1970, note 4, and further in Beeston, 1977). The use of *qātil* for ordinal numbers in Arabic, Ge'ez, modern (and presumably also Epigraphic) South Arabic may be due to shared innovation; it might, however, also be the result of parallel development and contact. Arabic *tanwīn* corresponds to Epigraphic South Arabic *tamyīm*; yet no clear indication for its general use in Ethiopic can be detected. All the South Semitic languages, even those which do not form the causative by **š*, form the *t*-form of the causative by **št*. This, however, may be due to phonetic reasons. Whereas no phonetic reasons opposed the replacement of the *š*-causative by the *h'*-causative, there were phonetic reasons not only for the preservation of the *t*-form of the *š*-causative, but even for the replacement of the *t*-form of the *h'*-causative (which sub-

19. Hetzron (1974, p. 183, following Lambert and Greenberg), considers the broken plurals to be a common (Hamito-) Semitic feature, regarding the *a*-plural of the segolate nouns in Hebrew a remnant of the broken plural as well. This view, however, is not convincing. Forms parallel to these *a*-plurals are well attested in Arabic, as *'aradūna* from *'ard* ("land"), *qarabāt* from *darb* ("blow"), and they must not be interpreted as ancient broken plurals with later addition of the sound plural suffixes, since in Classical Arabic it is the broken plural that expands to the detriment of the sound plurals. Accordingly, the type *ğuraf* ("rooms") has to be regarded as later than *ğurafāt*. Therefore the *a*-plurals of the monosyllabic ("segolate") nouns have to be considered as original sound plurals, rather than broken plurals with later addition of the plural suffixes.

sisted in Aramaic only; for a different interpretation see Bravmann, 1977, pp. 201–202). For shared lexical features between Arabic and Ethiopic cf., e.g., Littmann (1954, p. 353).

5.1.4 On the other hand, other indications for the alleged special affinity of Arabic with Canaanite and Aramaic, adduced by Hetzron (and following him by Rabin in a lecture delivered at the Seventh World Congress of Jewish Studies, August 1977), are not convincing. Hetzron (1976, pp. 92–93) has rightly stressed what he calls “the principle of archaic heterogeneity” (cf. also, e.g., Blau, 1972a, pp. 90, 120), according to which the relatively most heterogeneous system is considered to be the most archaic, the more homogeneous ones being assumed to have risen as a result of simplification. Yet he does not sufficiently take into consideration that such simplifications may arise independently in various languages as a result of linguistic drift. Hetzron (1974, p. 191; 1975, pp. 93–94) posits two innovative groups: Central Semitic—including Canaanite, Aramaic, and Arabic; and South Semitic—consisting of South Arabic and Ethiopic; Central Semitic having innovated *t*-suffixes in the perfect in a homogeneous way, South Semitic *k*-suffixes, whereas Akkadian has preserved heterogeneous *k* and *t*. That the heterogeneous system of Akkadian has been made homogeneous in all the other Semitic languages is quite understandable. Yet, there were only two ways in which this could be achieved: by the preponderance of either *t* or *k*. Since the chances in each direction were fifty percent, the chances of independent development are extraordinarily high,²⁰ so that it must not be used for genetic grouping.

Hetzron (1974, pp. 189–190; 1976, pp. 94–95) has, quite ingeniously, called attention to the heterogeneity of the prefix-vowels in the prefix tense of G in Akkadian, as against their uniformity in the other Semitic languages. These split into two branches: South Semitic (= South Arabic and Ethiopic), which completely eliminated the open vowel *a* from the system; and “Central Semitic,” which originally used *a* before thematic *i/u*, but *i* before thematic *a*; later Arabic generalized *a* and “the rest submitted the prefix vowels to a reduction process.”²¹ Again, it is very difficult to use this feature for genetic classification. It is not even quite certain that the heterogeneity of Akkadian is

20. Through the influence of the corresponding pronominal suffixes, new suffixes penetrated into the second person of the perfect in various dialects (see Nöldeke, 1904b, pp. 21–22), an additional indication for the wide range of independent parallel development.

21. So Hetzron (1976, p. 95). This, to be sure, is not entirely accurate in Hebrew, but this fact does not affect the problem treated.

archaic. Hetzron himself (1976, p. 93) cautioned against using heterogeneity as an indication of an archaic feature if one can find a clear conditioning for differentiation. This, indeed, can be detected in this case: the prefix *ni* might have been originally *na*, which later became *ni* through the impact of the corresponding separate personal pronoun **nihnū* (see Ungnad, cited by Hetzron, 1974, p. 190, note 10); whereas *i* might have risen from *ya* through assimilation (for *ya > i* in Old Akkadian, see Gelb, 1961, p. 122). Yet even if the Akkadian heterogeneity turns out to be archaic, nothing may, in my opinion, be inferred from it for the genetic classification of West Semitic. First, it may well be that the opposition *yiqtal:yaqtul* is a general West Semitic phenomenon, characteristic not only of "Central" Semitic, but of South Semitic as well. As is well known, this opposition disappeared also in "Central" Semitic, leaving a few vestiges in Hebrew and only slight traces in Aramaic and Arabic. Accordingly, its absence in most branches of South Semitic (Ethiopic, modern South Arabic) may well be due to later development, just as it totally disappeared in modern Arabic dialects, whereas we do not know anything of the prefix vowels in Epigraphic South Arabic, the only other alleged branch of South Semitic. On the other hand, this opposition might have emerged independently in different dialects. It is not unreasonable to assume that in some dialects the prefix vowel *a* prevailed, to become *i*, through dissimilation, when preceding *a*,²² thus giving rise to *yiqtal:yaqtul*. Yet the development might have been much more involved; the possible intricacy of this process may easily be learned from Grotzfeld's attempts (1964, pp. 28–31) to explain the shift of original *a* to *i* (and later, in certain positions, its reduction) in the dialect of Damascus both medially and in affixes. At any rate, one should rather refrain from using the differences in the prefix-vowels of the prefix-tense G as an indication for genetic classification.

Even less convincing is Hetzron's suggestion (1976, p. 103) to group Arabic and Hebrew together within his alleged Central Semitic, on the grounds that these two languages are "innovative" as against the more archaic Aramaic, insofar as the feminine plural endings in the second and third persons of the verbal conjugations are concerned. The ending is *-ā* in Akkadian and Ethiopic, *-ān* (with an added *-n*) in Aramaic, whereas Arabic and Hebrew exhibit *-na/nā*. There is, in my mind, no doubt whatsoever that Arabic and Hebrew reflect independent parallel development. Hetzron himself saw the reasons for the Hebrew and Arabic innovation quite clearly (in note 25): it was necessitated by the homonymy with the dual ending, and was based on the ending of the corresponding independent pronouns. He even

22. For such a dissimilation in later biblical Hebrew, see Blake (1950).

adduced parallel cases from modern South Arabic, which he rightly considered to be independent innovations. Exactly in the same way, the Hebrew and Arabic innovations were also independent.

5.1.5 So far we have dealt with the features adduced by Hetzron for the alleged genetic grouping of Arabic with Canaanite and Aramaic. In the following section we shall adduce some features, not hitherto proposed—shared by Arabic, Canaanite, and Aramaic—which cannot, in my opinion, be used for genetic classification either.

An outstanding feature is, *prima facie*, the shift of the feminine suffix *-at* to *-ahl/-al/-ā*, attested in North West Semitic and Arabic. Yet a closer look reveals that this surprising conformity is by no means complete, and because of the different dates at which these suffixes occurred, has to be interpreted as due to parallel development. This shift is totally absent from Ugaritic, yet occurs in Hebrew in both nouns and verbs. In Phoenician it is attested in the verb yet absent in the noun.²³ In Aramaic and modern Arabic dialects, on the other hand, it is absent in the verb,²⁴ yet attested in the noun. In Classical Arabic it occurs in nouns in the pausal forms²⁵ (in the form *-ah*), but is absent in verbs and in nouns in context forms. The gap in the dates at which this phenomenon occurs in the various languages is even greater. In Classical

23. In Moabite, too, *prima facie* *-at* is preserved in nouns; no examples of the third person feminine singular of the suffix tense are attested. It was in late Punic only that *t* was omitted in nouns as well (see Friedrich, 1951, p. 99). The reason for the preservation of the *t* in nouns in Phoenician seems to be that this shift operated in Phoenician in a period in which nouns had still kept case vowels. Therefore the *t* in nouns was not yet in a final position and, accordingly, not affected by the shift, in contradistinction to the vowelless third person feminine singular of the tense suffix (see Friedrich, 1951, p. 19, note 2). In el-Amarna, *-at* in verbs is still preserved (see Friedrich, 1951, p. 19).

24. Birkeland (1940, p. 97) explained the preservation of *-at* in the verb by differentiation (*darabat* > **darabah* would have been taken for <*darabahū*). This explanation, however, is not convincing, since similar forces operated in the realm of the noun as well (**malikat* > *malikah* could be mistaken for *malikahū*). I would tentatively propose, for both Aramaic and Arabic, that *-at* shifted to *-a(h)*, whereas *-āt* (cf. the feminine plural ending in nouns) was preserved. As is well known, the influence of verbs with a final weak consonant on the other verbal classes is quite conspicuous (cf., e.g., Brockelmann, 1908-13, pp. 567, 574), whereas that of nouns with a final weak consonant is much more restricted. It was through the influence of verbs *III w/y*, which exhibited *-āt* in the 3rd person fem. sing., that *t* was preserved in verbs. On the other hand, nouns *III w/y* terminating in **-āt* shifted to *-āh* through the influence of nouns with the **-at* > *ah* ending.

25. By no means should one posit pausal orthography outside Arabic. In Arabic itself, it is due to historical chance: since Arabic orthography continued Nabatean Aramaic and the Nabatean forms were mostly identical with the Arabic pausal ones, they were reinterpreted as pausal forms. For particulars see Blau, forthcoming, §4.3.

Arabic, as stated, until about 700 A.D., *-at* was preserved in bound forms,²⁶ whereas, much more than a millennium earlier, it had already disappeared in the oldest Phoenician and Aramaic inscriptions (in the verb and the noun, respectively). Accordingly, this case may be considered a *locus classicus* for the extent of proven parallel development.

Hebrew, Ugaritic, Aramaic, and Arabic have, in various degrees, preserved indications for the forming of the plural of monosyllabic nouns (including those with a feminine ending) by the insertion of *a* between the second and third radicals.²⁷ However, this feature, in all likelihood, is not only an archaism, but it is attested in Ge'ez as well (though only after liquids, where it *may* also be anaptyctic; see Nöldeke, 1904a, p. 70).

Nor should one attribute too much importance to the word "what" being expressed by *mā/mah* in Ugaritic, Canaanite, Aramaic and Arabic (cf. Loewenstamm, 1958–59, p. 74), not only because it may exhibit an archaic feature, but also because a lexical feature such as this may easily be borrowed from dialect to dialect (cf. Singer's summary, 1958, pp. 257–258, as to the interrogative pronouns in the Arabic dialects).

5.2 Not only does Arabic share innovative features with South Arabic (see Sections 5.1.1 and 5.1.2 above), whereas its features common with Canaanite and Aramaic are due to inheritance or parallel development (see Sections 5.1.3 and 5.1.4 above), but it also lacks features characteristic to North West Semitic. Because of the close contact between the Semitic languages, and the large extent of parallel development, one must not claim that these features cogently prove that the North West Semitic dialects once formed a unity in which these features developed. On the contrary, in some cases these features are shared by other Semitic languages as well, thus making the possibility of parallel development even more likely. On the other hand, synchronically at least, the lack of these features in Arabic differentiates it from North West Semitic, making its closer affinity with Canaanite and Aramaic (even historically) rather unlikely.

In North West Semitic, Proto-Semitic *w* in initial position is represented by *y*. I do not claim that this feature could not have developed independently

26. Even later is the shift *-at* > *oh/-əh* in modern South Arabic, since it occurs only in one dialect, in Socotri (see Johnstone, 1975, p. 20). The final *h* that exists not only in Arabic, but in this dialect as well, makes it quite likely that in the other Semitic languages *t* first shifted to *h*, to become afterwards zero.

27. For Hebrew, Aramaic and Arabic, see Nöldeke (1904a, p. 70); for Ugaritic cf., e.g., *rīš* ('head'), plural *r'āsm*. Ginsberg (1970, p. 102) was therefore wrong in restricting this feature to Canaanite (including Ugaritic) and Aramaic only. Cf. also note 19 above.

as well, especially since in Arabic also some isolated roots exhibit both *w* and *y* as the first radical (see Nöldeke, 1910, pp. 203–206). Nevertheless, it is quite a strong (admittedly phonological) piece of evidence for the unity of North West Semitic, since it is not easy to explain it phonetically (see Nöldeke, 1910, p. 202).

On the other hand, the total assimilation of vowelless *n* to the following consonant, characteristic of North West Semitic, might have easily emerged independently. It is a well-established feature of Akkadian and is sporadically attested in South Semitic as well. In Classical Arabic it is well attested in *sandhi*; and for Epigraphic South Arabic cf. Beeston (1962, pp. 16–17). Less convincing is the absence of *lqh* ('take'), imperfect *yqh* in Arabic, as against its attestation in North West Semitic, in Ugaritic, Hebrew, Moabite and Aramaic (see Degen, 1969, p. 79 and Hoftijzer, 1965, s.v.).

5.3 It has been claimed several times that South Arabic and Ethiopic (excluding Arabic) exhibit special ties with East Semitic (see the literature cited by Cantineau, 1932, p. 178; and Hetzron, 1974, pp. 183–184). This claim has been refuted by Cantineau (1932) and Leslau (1959). It will suffice to refer the reader to these papers, though I do not agree with every item adduced. Thus (in spite of Soden, 1957), I would posit (for 'twenty') Proto-Semitic **īsrā*, terminating in an original dual ending (= 'twice ten'), and for the other tens the plural suffix *-ūn(a)/-īn(a)*. In Akkadian and Ethiopic (in the latter it is the only remnant of the nominative dual ending, as against *-ē* in other cases), as well as in modern South Arabic, if one is entitled to infer such from remnants in Socotri (as cited by Johnstone, 1975, p. 24), *-ā* analogically spread over the whole paradigm, whereas in the other Semitic languages it was the plural ending that prevailed. Verbal themes occurring in both Akkadian and Ethiopic formed by a combination of morphemes are, in all likelihood, due to late parallel development; cf., e.g., Middle Hebrew *niqattēl* as well as similar formations in Arabic dialects (see Brockelmann, 1908–1913, pp. 540–541; Littmann, 1954, p. 359). On the other hand (*pace* Leslau, 1959, p. 252), the semantic independence of the Ethiopic forms is, in all likelihood, a late development. As to the causative *š*, as well as *ʾšt* ('one'), these forms are, as we know now, attested in Ugaritic as well. For *-ku* marking the first person singular of the suffix tense/stative in Akkadian and Ethiopic/South Arabic, cf. Hetzron (1974, p. 191 and 1976, pp. 93–94); for *yaqattal* etc., see Section 4.2 above; for Proto-Semitic *šlθ*, see Blau (1972b, p. 80).

5.4 Accordingly, one may retain the 'accepted' grouping of South Arabic, Ethiopic, and Arabic as South (West) Semitic. Within South (West) Semitic,

Ethiopic and South Arabic form a unit, as opposed to Arabic (see, e.g., Cantineau, 1932, pp. 178–185; Hetzron, 1977, p. 12; cf. also the glottalized pronunciation of emphatics in modern South Arabic and Ethiopic [Johnstone, 1975, pp. 6–7]), dubbed by Leslau South East Semitic.

6. Having arrived at the conclusion that Arabic does not form a unit with North West Semitic, we may now proceed to subdivide the North West Semitic languages. We shall not deal with so-called “Amorite,” not only because our knowledge is too restricted for any linguistic classification, but also because of our knowledge of the language of Ebla at this time, and it would not be prudent to rush to any conclusions. Taking the accepted division into Canaanite and Aramaic for granted (without broaching the question whether these linguistic groups arose in accordance with the family-tree theory or the wave hypothesis, although we tend to accept the latter; see Sections 2 and 3 above), we shall proceed to the linguistic position of Ugaritic.

6.1 It is now (see Gordon, 1965, p. 144, who cites additional literature) more or less generally accepted that Ugaritic is a North West Semitic language, yet disagreement exists as to whether to consider it a separate subdivision of North West Semitic or rather to group it within Canaanite. Recently, in a brilliant essay, Ginsberg (1970, especially pp. 102 and 104–106) grouped Ugaritic within Canaanite together with Phoenician, as opposed to Hebraic (consisting of Hebrew and Moabite). I think that Ginsberg has proven his point that Ugaritic is more closely related to Canaanite than to Aramaic. On the other hand, in my opinion, Phoenician and Hebraic belong together (“Canaanite”), as opposed to Ugaritic.²⁸

6.2 From the features distinguishing Canaanite and Ugaritic from Aramaic adduced by Ginsberg (1970, pp. 103–104), I have not found any that cannot be reasonably attributed either to archaism or parallel development and/or

28. One could dub Ugaritic and Canaanite as “Canaanite.” Yet not only is this a mere play of words, but it also implies genetic affinity in accordance with the family-tree theory (cf. Section 6.2 below). Contrary to Ginsberg (1970, p. 105), I would not simply group the Canaanisms and Canaanite glosses in the Akkadian letters from el-Amarna with Phoenician. It stands to reason that, according to their places of provenance, some were closer to Phoenician, and others closer to Hebrew. Thus, in my opinion, it is not due to mere chance that it is in a letter from Palestinian Gezer that *baniti* (“I built,” in accordance with Hebrew), is attested (el-Amarna 292, 29) as against Phoenician *ḫtī* (cf. Friedrich, 1951, p. 77). The Canaanite material in these letters, however, is much too restricted to enable us to make these subdivisions.

contact. Nevertheless, one will readily admit that synchronically, Ugaritic exhibits special affinity to Canaanite, though presumably it did not form a genetic group with it within North West Semitic; but rather, in accordance with the wave hypothesis, it more or less developed in the same direction through contact and/or parallel development.

In Canaanite and Ugaritic a suppletive paradigm *hlk* ~ *ylk* ('to go') exists. Yet not only does Akkadian *alākum* exhibit the apophony *a* ~ *i*, as in verbs *lw* (see Soden, 1952, p. 128) and Aramaic exhibits suppletive *hlk/hwk*, but the spread of suppletive *hlk/ylk* < *wlk* may be due to mutual contact and/or parallel development. Such parallel development might have started from the imperative **hlk* > *lik*, on the one hand, or from the causative **hahlak* > *hōlak* in the dialects with *h*-causative (i.e., with the exclusion of Ugaritic), on the other.

The lexical parallels between Ugaritic and Canaanite adduced by Ginsberg are rather impressive. Yet, partly at least, they may well be due to the cultural relation of Ugaritic poetry with Canaanite (Hebrew) poetry.

Nothing must be inferred from the *t* prefix of the third person feminine plural of the prefix tense. Such an analogical formation, due to the impact of the singular, might well have emerged independently, as it emerged in ancient Arabic dialects (see, e.g., Brockelmann, 1908-13, I, p. 568), in Epigraphic South Arabic (see Beeston, 1962, p. 23) and modern South Arabic (see Johnstone, 1975, pp. 16-17).

Quite a conspicuous isogloss connecting Hebrew with Ugaritic is the merger (synchronically at least) of the D of *ll w/y* and the *pōlēl* forms etc. The extent of this phenomenon surely gives the impression of later innovation. Parallel development, however, must not be excluded. Several Semitic languages exhibit aversion to doubling *w/y* (i.e., *pawwel*, *payyel*), resorting instead to the doubling of the third radical (for Arabic *baynūna*, *daymūma*, Akkadian *tukinnā*, cf. Blau, 1971, p. 147, note 63; for Aramaic 'etbawrar etc., cf. *ibid.*, p. 148). With this background one has to take into consideration also the possibility of convergent development.

In Canaanite (for Phoenician, cf. Friedrich, 1951, pp. 61, 72) certain active participle forms are simply the stem of the perfect (!) inflected as a noun. Such features, however, are not completely absent from other Semitic languages either. In Arabic, adjectives (not real participles) such as *hāf* ('afraid') from roots *ll w/y* are attested (see Nöldeke, 1910, pp. 210-216). Similarly, *qatil* serves as verbal adjective from intransitive verbs of the *qatila* pattern (see Wright, 1896-98, I, p. 132) and is, as a matter of fact, much more frequent than the 'real' participle *qātil*. For Aramaic, cf. *šāḇ* ('elder'). Accordingly, Nöldeke's cautious remark (1910, p. 209) concern-

ing roots // *w/y*, that this formation “for all that” be considered Proto-Semitic is quite convincing and thus one may regard this feature as an archaism that has been preserved (and perhaps expanded, to some extent).

For the use of the prefix vowel *a* preceding the thematic vowel *i/u* of the prefix tense, of the prefix vowel *i* preceding *a*, see Section 5.1.3 above.²⁹

6.3 The features adduced by Ginsberg (1970, pp. 105–106) as distinguishing Phoenician, el-Amarna, and Ugaritic from Hebrew and Moabite are not convincing. Lexical features, especially those that are attested in Hebrew as well, though rare and/or poetic, can scarcely be used as decisive proof for genetic classification, the more so when the Ugaritic word *pa'n* (“foot”) differs from the Phoenician and Hebrew *pa'm* (rare in Hebrew). The possibility not only of contact, but even of parallel development is considerable: cf., e.g., for “to be,” Phoenician, Ugaritic, and Arabic *kwn*, Hebrew *hyy/hwy*, and Aramaic *hwy*, as cited by Ginsberg himself. *ytn* (“to give”) in Ugaritic and Phoenician, is, it seems, due to later independent development, starting from the imperative *tin*, which, because of its identity with verbs *l w*, was transferred into that verbal class. Nor is the Hebrew use of perfect and imperfect consecutive suitable for genetic classification. It is due to the special Hebrew (and Moabite) development of elements to be found in Phoenician as well, as so ably demonstrated by Ginsberg; cf. also for the consecutive imperfect the *'hrm* inscription line 2 *wygl*, continuing the perfect *'ly*. This development surely distinguishes Hebrew and Moabite from Phoenician, being due to a later, presumably shared, innovation; it does not, however, group Ugaritic with Phoenician. A quite conspicuous feature connecting Ugaritic with el-Amarna is the use of *tqtlû* for the third person masculine plural. This feature, however, is absent not only from Hebrew, but presumably from Phoenician as well (see Friedrich, 1951, p. 54, note 1).

6.4 On the other hand, important isoglosses distinguish Ugaritic from Hebrew and Phoenician, thus separating these languages (as the Canaanite group) from Ugaritic. Not all the features, to be sure, are equally apt for genetic classification; together, however, in my opinion, they sufficiently warrant a Canaanite group not including Ugaritic.

In my opinion, Ugaritic clearly exhibits the shift $\delta > d$. The attempt to interpret the Ugaritic *d* as polyphonic, marking both *d* and δ is, to my mind

29. Ginsberg (1970, p. 104) also adduces causative forms like *hehbî* (“he hid”), occurring in Hebrew, Phoenician and el-Amarna. In my opinion, this form has to be considered an archaism, its corresponding form *šuprus* being attested in Akkadian also; cf. Blau (1971, pp. 152–158).

fallacious (for particulars, see Blau, 1968). The assumption of polyphony does not fit the character of the Ugaritic script, which exhibits added symbols at its end. This sound shift clearly separates Ugaritic from all the Canaanite dialects known.

It seems that a dialect of Ugaritic also exhibited the shift $\delta > t$. Dietrich *et al.* (1975) have cited seven words (in ten occurrences) exhibiting the spelling with δ for t . Five of these occur in one group of texts. In the dialect underlying these texts, δ had shifted to t ; accordingly, there was no difference in whether the sound t was marked by the letter t or δ . In this group of texts it was, from the point of view of the history of the alphabet, the letter δ that prevailed, just as in Ge'ez the letter z continued South Arabic δ , rather than z , and \check{s} in the Canaanite alphabet occupies the place of θ , as demonstrated by the Ugaritic alphabet. Two words occur in the archaizing text (Gordon, 1965, text 77) in which δ also had shifted to t . In this text the use of the letter δ is due to some sort of pseudo-archaism. At any rate, it seems that in at least one Ugaritic dialect, δ , contrary to Canaanite, had shifted to t (whereas the weak sound shift $\delta > \acute{g}$ exhibits a different dialect). These sound shifts, in my opinion, clearly distinguish Ugaritic from Canaanite.

Other important features common to Hebrew and Phoenician, yet absent from Ugaritic, are: the definite article *ha-*, the shift $\bar{a} > \bar{o}$,³⁰ and the relative pronoun *'āšer/šel'š* (for its absence in Ugaritic, see Rainey, 1965-66, pp. 261-263). The first two features are, in my opinion, quite important, whereas I would not attach too much importance to the relative pronoun. I also mention here, somewhat with hesitation (since Aramaic and Arabic parallels are not lacking³¹), *yt/t' et/ōt* denoting the definite direct object in Canaanite dialects and lacking in Ugaritic (so far, at least).

7. We have tried to show that the wave hypothesis is much more convincing for the understanding of the classification of the Semitic languages than the family-tree theory (Section 2) and that parallel development characterizes the Semitic languages even more than the Indo-European ones (Section 2.1). This may also be inferred from the modern Arabic dialects, the proto-language of which can relatively easily be reconstructed with the help of Classical Arabic (Sections 3, 3.1, 3.2): they attest even to the transfer of unmotivated mor-

30. Since "I" is transcribed in Ugaritic *a-na-ku* in the quadrilingual word list, it stands to reason that, contrary to Canaanite (and perhaps even Aramaic, see Lipiński, 1976, p. 233a/b), the first person singular of the suffix tense terminated in *-tu*, rather than in *-ti/-ī*, as in the Canaanite dialects.

31. See Dion (1974, pp. 164-165).

phological innovations (Section 3.2). The basic division of the Semitic languages into East and West Semitic is well established (Section 4). It stands to reason that *yaqtulu* was a part also of the verbal system of Proto-South East Semitic (Section 5), and perhaps even of that of Akkadian, and thus Proto-Semitic (Sections 4.1, 4.2). Arabic has to be grouped with South Arabic and Ethiopic as "South (West) Semitic" (Section 5.1), because of shared innovations between them (Sections 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.1.3), whereas the isoglosses connecting Arabic with North West Semitic are not relevant for genetic classification (Sections 5.1.4, 5.1.5). Moreover, Arabic lacks features characteristic of North West Semitic (Section 5.2). Since South Arabic and Ethiopic do not evince special ties connecting them with Akkadian (Section 5.3), one should retain the "accepted" grouping of Arabic, South Arabic, and Ethiopic as "South (West) Semitic," within which the last two groups form a unit ("South East Semitic"; Section 5.4). West Semitic consists of South (West) Semitic and North West Semitic, the last being sub-divided (disregarding "Amorite") into Ugaritic, Canaanite (including, *inter alia*, Hebrew and Phoenician), and Aramaic (Section 6.1). Ugaritic is closer to Canaanite than to Aramaic; it cannot, however, be regarded as a Canaanite dialect proper (Section 6). Though the isoglosses marking off Canaanite and Ugaritic from Aramaic do not prove the genetic unity of Canaanite and Ugaritic, nevertheless they demonstrate, at least synchronically, quite a conspicuous affinity (Section 6.2). The isoglosses separating Ugaritic from Hebrew and Phoenician (including el-Amarna) (Section 6.4) are more relevant than those distinguishing Phoenician (including el-Amarna) and Ugaritic from Hebrew (and Moabite) (Section 6.3).

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